

Journey Through The Cities Of Refuge

Lesson #21

Hebron: Instructions For Spiritual Warfare June 10, 2026

I Cor. 10:11-12 Now all these things happened to them as examples,
and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Rom. 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning,
that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Before Israel entered the Promised Land, God outlined His covenant in the plains of Moab. He commanded them to annihilate pagan influences and keep His laws, while promising them victory, abundant provision, and an everlasting national inheritance.

God, through Moses, instructs the children of Israel how to live in the fullness of God's covenantal promises. This is more than a list of rules, regulations, and commandments. God is giving His children instructions:

How to fully experience the prosperity He desires to lavish upon them.

God reminds them: This is a daily faith, requiring a daily honoring of God's will and ways.

The irony of entering the Promised Land:

The Israelites lose their tenacity of faith as they enjoy the fruit of God's faithfulness.

Powerful Reminder: Having our prayers answered does not necessarily lead to greater obedience. When facing extreme adversity or abundant fruitfulness our response must be the same: Complete Obedience!

Before entering the Promised Land, God gave the Israelites clear, actionable commands in the Book of Deuteronomy To Ensure:

- they maintained their identity,
- they defeated opposing nations, and
- they avoided the moral corruption common in Canaan.

In Deuteronomy 4, Moses warned Israel even before they entered the land:

- Their stay in the land would not last long if they forsook God.
- He testified by the heavens and the earth that God would judge disobedience.

Deut. 4:2 Do not add or subtract. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deut. 4:15-19 Beware of Idolatry: Because they saw no physical form of God at Mt. Horeb, they were forbidden from making any carved images or worshiping the sun, moon and stars.

God is a "Consuming Fire": Deut. 4:24 God is a jealous God who will not tolerate rival deities.

Consequences of Disobedience: Deut. 4:25-28 If they turned to idols, they would provoke God's anger which would result in their exile from the Promised Land. Scattered among the nations

The Promise of Mercy: Despite these severe warnings, Moses offered a message of hope. He assured Israel that if they eventually seek God in their distress and return to Him, He is a merciful God who will not forget the covenant.

Prior to entering the Promised Land, Moses reminds the nation Israel of the

10 Commandments they received from God when they stood before Mount Sinai.

Deut. 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: [foundational command]

The God who saved them out of slavery in Egypt, must be the only God they love and worship.

Destroy Idols: Tear down the altars, sacred pillars and idols in the land.

Idolatry was such a grave transgression to God that He threatened to remove them out of the promised land if they worshiped other gods.

Avoid Pagan Practices: They were explicitly forbidden from adopting the religious or cultural practices of the surrounding nations, including child sacrifice, divination, and sorcery.

Deut. 6:16 You shall not put the LORD (YHWH) to the test, as you tested him at Massah.

The children of Israel refused to rest in the fact that God's miraculous power had brought them out of their bondage in Egypt. When the water ran out at Massah [Ex. 17:1-7], they grumbled greatly against God and were ready to stone Moses. At Massah the people did not value God's past and present provision. They did not believe He would continue to provide. Facing adversity, the children of Israel exercised extreme discontent over extreme faith. Ways we test God, rather than choose faith.

1. We forget God's past provision.
2. We don't value God's present provision.
3. We don't believe in God's future provision.
4. We don't value God's messenger.

Deut. 6:17 "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD (YHWH) your God, and His testimonies and His statutes, which He has commanded you."

God's Word instructs the soul, motivates the heart, and enlivens the mind.

The reality: God's Word cannot be fully activated in our lives unless it is fully valued.

We grow in God as we learn to activate God's word and will in every aspect of our lives.

God's word must always be before us. There is a reservoir we can draw from when the Word permeates the daily habits of our lives. The word requires a diligent pursuit.

Deut. 6:18-19 "And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD (YHWH), that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers by thrusting out all your enemies before you, as the LORD (YHWH) has promised."

Prov. 3:7 "Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil."

Once we begin to validate our actions and behaviors on anything but God's timeless word, we find death and decay.

What is right and good is not culturally relative; it is rooted in God's Word.

Full possession was more than a territorial mandate; it was a command to be a certain way while in the land. Full possession was defined not by boundary markers, but by obedience. God is not calling us to a series of rules and regulations. Rather, He is calling us to come alive in a genuine, tenacious pursuit of His Word and ways.

God wants His good news to take full possession of us.

We are called not only to receive Jesus, but to yield completely to His will.

Phil. 3:12 Not that I have already obtained it [this goal of being Christlike] or have already been made perfect, but I actively press on so that I may take hold of that [perfection] for which Christ Jesus took hold of me *and* made me His own. [AMP]

The land of promise was not a paradise on earth, but a battlefield which needed to be conquered. It was not child's play to take possession of the land.

God warned Israel: After they crossed the Jordan,
new challenges awaited which outstripped their capabilities.

Deut. 7:1-2 When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are about to enter and occupy, He will clear away [cast out] many nations ahead of you: the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. These seven nations are greater and more numerous than you. ² When the Lord your God hands these nations over to you and you conquer them, you must completely destroy them. Make no treaties with them and show them no mercy.

- Israel was to be a counter cultural force.

Cast Out: 5394. Nashal = remove, clear away

Divine Dispossession of Nations underscores God's sovereign right to disinherit the wicked and plant His people.

Deut. 7:22 And the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once,

- Guards Israel from presumption;
- Victory arrives at God's pace, not theirs.

Conversely, II Kings 16:6 shows the word, nashal, in reverse: Judah, now covenant-breakers, experiences the same expulsion once used against Canaanites. Scripture's consistency is evident.

- Obedience secures the land; disobedience forfeits it.
- Holiness precedes mission. Sandals come off before assignments begin.

Reverence Before God: God To Moses: Ex. 3:5 Do not draw near this place.

Take your sandals off [nashal] your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.

Joshua 5:15 Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua,

"Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

- Taking off the sandals was a profound sign of reverence, submission, and humility.
- A reminder of God's absolute authority, divine presence, and the sanctity of the mission the Israelites were about to undertake.

Truth: God alone grants or removes inheritance.

- He dispossesses nations and can just as readily dispossess His own.
- Personal devotion: Regularly "remove the sandals" of pride and routine when approaching prayer and Scripture.
- Expect victories "little by little," nurturing patience and dependence.
- Discipleship: Teach that unrepented sin leads to forfeiture—be it peace, fruitfulness, or inheritance. Repentance restores what was cast off [Joel 2:25].

Key: The seven occurrences of nashal weave a single, coherent testimony:

God calls His people to holy proximity, grants them territory and blessing, warns of careless harm, and disciplines unfaithfulness—all by the same decisive act of removal.

Deuteronomy 7:17-24 Passage of encouragement! Moses reminds the Israelites

Do Not Fear the stronger, more numerous Canaanite nations.

The Trap of Sight over Faith

¹⁷If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'— ¹⁸you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:

The Struggle: Moses acknowledges the natural human tendency to look at obstacles—like walled cities and massive armies—and become terrified.

The Solution: He commands the Israelites not to be intimidated by the superior numbers of their enemies, but instead to REMEMBER God's track record.

- Recalling past deliverance builds courage for current battles.

Divine Guarantee of Victory 7:19-21

¹⁹ the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the Lord your God brought you out. So shall the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

²⁰ Moreover the Lord your God will send the *hornet [terror] among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. ²¹ You shall not be terrified of them; for the Lord your God, the great and awesome God, is among you.

- God says He will remove those enemies that "hide themselves from you."

These pockets of resistance that remained in the Promised Land after the major wars had been fought were hidden and entrenched, and extremely difficult to deal with and remove.

- God's Presence: The Israelites do not fight alone. Because the "great and awesome God" is among them, the fear of the enemy is meant to be removed.
- Active Deliverance: God promises to drive out their foes. He will send the "hornet" ahead of them, which is often interpreted either literally or as a metaphor, for God causing panic, confusion, and distress among the enemy nations.

The Gradual Process 17:22-24

²² And the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.

²³ But the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. ²⁴ And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

Complete Overthrow: Ultimately, God promises to throw their enemies into massive confusion and deliver their kings into Israel's hands, so that no one will be able to stand against them

God's Solution: Send in His special storm troopers, the hornets. When God sends the hornets after "our enemies in our nature," He is sending the hornets after us personally! Hornets represent divine intervention used to clear obstacles, drive out enemies, or bring sudden discomfort to move you forward.

There are pockets of resistance in our old nature to the control and dominion of the Holy Spirit. Some are hidden from our eyes; secret faults; hidden enemies.

Blessed is the man or woman who learns to change when God speaks. If we still haven't changed, He will send in the hornets. Some hornets God sends change our behavior immediately. Some reveal to us character flaws that may have been hidden from our eyes. Hornets are symbolic stinging rebukes, painful consequences, trouble and difficulty, financial reverses; in short things that are painful and get your full and immediate attention. God "sticks our nose in messes" we make, we feel the consequences, we are embarrassed by public disclosure, or all of a sudden our "sleeping" conscience is awakened and greatly troubled by our actions, taking away our sleep or sense of peace until the situation is remedied by repentance and change. Once you have been stung by a hornet, it is something you will go to great lengths to avoid happening again. Hornets are not your enemy. Sin is your enemy. Be thankful for "God's hornets."

Spurgeon: You would not pray if you had not trouble; I am afraid you would grow lax, cold, indifferent; but these sting you, and you say, "I must go to my God for comfort under this pest, this nuisance." Why, what a blessing that is for you to be stung to your Father's feet! — blessed sting that brings you there. You would not value the promises half so much if it were not for the hornets; but you turn to some precious Word of God that just suits your case, and you say, "I never saw such sweetness in that as I do now. Blessed be God for sending a passage so suitable to my condition." The hornets take you to the promise and seem to point you to the place where the milk and honey flow.

God's Instructions to Conquer Canaan: Abundant Life - Spiritual Promised Land- God's Rest
Numbers 33:51-53, 55 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan,⁵² then you shall drive out ALL the inhabitants of the land [our soul- mind, will, emotions] from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their high places;⁵³ you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to possess. (Promise)
But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain shall be irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell. [Consequences of Disobedience & Unbelief]

Deut. 8 A Warning Against Forgetfulness: Do Not Forget the Lord:

God commanded the people to remember their past in the wilderness and carefully obey the laws, warning them not to become arrogant and forget the Lord once they were living in wealthy, established cities they did not build.

Deut. 9:1-3, 6 "Hear, O Israel: You *are* to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven,² a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and *of whom* you heard *it said*, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?'³ Therefore understand today that the Lord your God *is* He who goes over before you *as* a consuming fire.

He will destroy them and bring them down before you;

so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord has said to you.

Direct Warning Against Spiritual Pride

⁶Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.

Divine Promise: God is honoring a historical covenant He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Israelites played no part in earning this favor.

Stiff-necked: Moses is reminding them of their own history of complaining, doubting, and disobeying God in the wilderness.

Despite their rebellious nature, God chose to show them mercy

Deut. 28: The Conditional Nature of the Covenant

While God's promises of ultimate preservation were absolute, the immediate blessings of living securely in the land were conditional. God warned that disobedience would lead to curses, crop failure, disease, defeat in battle, and ultimately exile from the land.

➤ Blessings and curses hinged entirely on their commitment to keeping God's laws.

Loss of the Promised Land: The ultimate consequence of ongoing rebellion was being exiled, scattered across the earth, and becoming subservient to foreign nations.

If they broke the covenant, they would be removed from the land,

though God left the door open for eventual restoration upon repentance. [Deut. 30]

Joshua 3:8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying,
When ye come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

Joshua 3:9-11 So Joshua said to the children of Israel,
"Come here and hear the words of the Lord your God."

Rom. 10:17 So then Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

¹⁰ And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the Living God is among you, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:

¹¹ Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan.

Joshua 3:3 When you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, move out from your positions and follow them.

⁴ Since you have never traveled this way before, they will guide you. [NLT]

Joshua symbolized	Jesus - the Provision of victory
Ark symbolized	Presence and Power of God
Priests symbolized	Purifying work of Sanctification by the Holy Spirit

Follow God's Lead: Israel needed a new mindset of faith and expectation.

- Trusting the path means focusing on God's direction rather than the size of the obstacle.
- It was an act of complete faith and commitment to the task God had set before them.

Just as God parted the Red Sea to deliver His people from slavery,

He parted the Jordan River to bring them into the Promised Land.

This demonstrates God's power to make a way where there is no human way,

showing that His grace is present for both our initial salvation and our daily life journey.

Establish Memorial of Remembrance: Two Sets of Stones

Joshua 4:8 And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the Lord had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there.

Joshua 4:9 Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day.

God knew that at times the Israelites would face intimidating enemies and would need a reminder that He was powerful enough to protect them. The Israelites might be tempted to think they made a mistake entering Canaan. So God instructed them to build a monument on the banks of the Jordan River. Whenever they returned to this spot, they would see the monument and be reminded of God's awesome power.

- This marker would give them confidence to meet the new challenges they faced.

Why 12 stones in the middle of the riverbed where the feet of the priests stood?

- During the dry season, the stones would be visible and remind them of God's miraculous power.

Combating Forgetfulness: Humans are prone to forget God's goodness during difficult times. The stones acted as permanent, visual reminders of a divine intervention that could no longer be seen once the river's floodwaters returned.

Faith Application: Just as the Israelites collected physical stones, believers are encouraged to document and celebrate moments of God's grace in their daily lives to foster continuous praise and gratitude.

Joshua 4:21-24 Then Joshua said to the Israelites, "In the future your children will ask, 'What do these stones mean?' ²² Then you can tell them, 'This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' ²³ For the Lord your God dried up the river right before your eyes, and he kept it dry until you were all across, just as he did at the Red Sea when he dried it up until we had all crossed over. ²⁴ He did this so all the nations of the earth might know that the Lord's hand is powerful, and so you might fear the Lord your God forever."

Passing the Torch: This highlights a core biblical mandate: parents and leaders must actively teach their children the stories of God's faithfulness and intervention, ensuring faith continues to thrive in future generations.

One of the ways God uses His power against the enemies of His children to favor them is by sending confusion to the camp of their enemies.

The "Ebenezer" Memorial: To commemorate the miraculous rescue, Samuel erects a large stone between Mizpah and Shen. He names it Ebenezer—meaning "stone of help"—declaring, "*Thus far the Lord has helped us.*" [I Sam. 7:12]

I Samuel 7 chronicles a spiritual revival in Israel led by the prophet Samuel.

Repentance and Revival: After the Ark of the Covenant is placed in Kirjath-jearim, the Israelites turn away from false idols and confess their sins. After 20 years of Philistine oppression, the Israelites lament and seek God. Samuel urges them to

discard their foreign gods, Baals and Ashtoreths, and serve the LORD exclusively.

The people fast, confess their sins, and gather at Mizpah.

Divine Deliverance at Mizpah: Learning of Israel's assembly, the Philistines mobilize to attack. Terrified, the Israelites beg Samuel to pray for them. Samuel offered a lamb as a sacrifice to God and cried out to the Lord to help them against the Philistines.

God sends a massive thunderstorm that throws the Philistine army into total confusion.

- Recognizing God's aid, the Israelites attacked the Philistines and defeated them.

Fulfilled promise of Exodus 23:27 I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you. It highlights God's active role in creating panic and confusion among opposing nations, ensuring victory as they journey to the Promised Land.

To commemorate the miraculous rescue, Samuel erects a large stone between Mizpah & Shiloh. He names it Ebenezer "stone of help" declaring, "thus far the LORD has helped us."

Confusion is invoked when the enemy expects a particular thing to happen and then something else happens instead. This includes nothing happening when an attack was expected.

Confusion may also be invoked by acting unpredictably.

The secret lies in confusing the enemy, so that He cannot fathom our real intent.

The next time you worry, confuse the enemy by worship. Stay quiet and let God remove the anger from your heart. Walk in righteousness and let God fight your battles.

Never forget who you are in Christ. Never forget whose you are.

An Alabama Town Has a Monument Honoring the Most Destructive Pest in American History

Vance Havner, in his book, *It Is Toward Evening*, tells the story of a group of farmers who were raising cotton in the Deep South when the devastating boll weevil invaded the crops. "These men had put all of their savings, dedicated all of their fields, set all of their hopes in cotton.

Then the boll weevil came. Before long, it looked as if they were headed for the poorhouse.

But farmers, being the determined and ingenious people they are, decided, "Well, we can't plant cotton, so let's plant peanuts." Amazingly, those peanuts brought them more money than they would have ever made raising cotton. When the farmers realized that what had seemed like a disaster had actually proved to be a boon, they erected a large and impressive monument to the boll weevil—a monument to the very thing they once thought would destroy them.

Havner: "Sometimes we settle into a humdrum routine as monotonous as growing cotton year after year. Then God sends the boll weevil. He jolts us out of our groove, and we must find new ways to live. Financial reverses, great bereavement, physical infirmity, loss of position.

How many have been driven by trouble to be better husbandmen and to bring forth far finer fruit from their souls!

The best thing that ever happened to some of us was the coming of our 'boll weevil.'

"What Means These Stones?"

These are the stones of the help that the LORD has allowed to come into my life."

I can see those stones. They have not been "stones of stumbling." Rather, the afflictions that I have seen have been building material. God has been building upon the foundation He laid in my life with those stones. Not only that, but He is also the one who carries the burden!

These "stones of the help" are constant reminders.

Phil. 1:6 "He who has begun a good work in me, will be faithful to complete it."